

~~SECURITY INFORMATION/US OFFICIALS ONLY~~

WILLOFAX 29

U 19042

Country: USSR

Subject: Illegal Speculation in Old Latvian Currency/Severe Sentences for Speculators

Place Acquired:

50X1

Date Acquired:

50X1

Date of Info: March-April 53

Source:

1. "A number of persons were arrested for 'currency speculations' in Riga during March and April 1953. These 'speculations' involved the purchase of old Latvian notes ('lats'). The price paid for 100 lats varied between two and six rubles.
2. "The first offenders were caught by the Militia at the beginning of March 1953 in the Babite district of Riga. Several searches were made in the houses of 'speculators', who were mainly workers employed at the local shipyards. According to unconfirmed information, about 200,000 lats were seized by the authorities and many persons arrested. Among them were (fnu) Bakans and (fnu) Sterns. All the prisoners have been transferred to the MVD prison in Riga.
3. "In mid-April 1953, specially assigned agents of the MVD organized ambushes on suspected persons and carried out searches in the port itself and in the Babite district. Again several persons were arrested.
4. "The MVD considers all dealings in the old Latvian currency an anti-Soviet political crime. The arrested 'speculators' will, after thorough investigation, be severely punished. According to a pronouncement made by an MVD interrogation official, (fnu) Medved, the guilty will be deported for permanent resettlement to the USSR, after they have served 20 years in corrective labor camps.
5. "This severe punishment is exactly that applied by the Soviet authorities in the Latvian S.S.R. for such offenses as anti-Soviet propaganda or aid to partisans."

- end -

RETURN TO CIA
LIBRARY

This unevaluated information for US officials
Only is supplied for the possible interest of
your analysts. It does not warrant dissemination by report.

50X1